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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which the size of school enrollment affects teacher control over discipline. The study was limited to high schools in Texas. Fifty high schools were randomly selected from each of five size classifications. A random sample of 750 Texas public high school teachers were selected for the study (150 from each category). Each of the 750 teachers was mailed a 41-item Linkert type survey instrument which was designed to reveal the degree to which they felt a loss of control over matters of student discipline. Responses were returned from 386 teachers. The study revealed that the size of school enrollment does not affect the teacher's perceived control over matters of student discipline; that is, there were no statistically significant differences among those teachers from each of the five high school classification categories. Analysis of the data further revealed no significant differences when considering the specific variables of teacher age, sex, teaching experience, and subject taught. (The survey instrument is included.) (RC)

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Teacher Control and School Size

The research study which serves as the basis for this article was essentially a result of two major sources of input. The first of these involves a large number of the authors' graduate students who have tended to support the following hypothesis:

> As high school populations grow in size, teachers lose their ability to discipline students both within their classes and in the school at large.

While teachers from large high schools tend to support this theory, teachers from small sized high schools largely reject this hypothesis, contending that they do not feel any loss of control in the area of discipline.

The second source of input resulted from the authors' frequent contact within the public schools, including consultancy work and supervision of student teaching. These contacts include high schools of various sizes. On the basis of these contacts, there appeared to be some justification for the hypothesis as stated above; that is, we observed much more disorder in the larger schools than the smaller, and especially was this so outside the classroom environment.

Given these two major sources of motivation, plus finding a dearth of research in the area, we conducted a study designed to determine the following:

> To what extent does the size of school enrollment affect teacher control over discipline?

Procedures

This study was limited to high schools in Texas. The five classification categories of student enrollment for high schools in Texas are:

B - 119 or fewer
A - 120 - 239
AA - 230 - 499
AAA - 500 - 1099
AAAA - 1100 or more

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Fifty high schools were randomly selected from each of the five classifications. Names of the teachers in these 50 high schools who had taught in their building for three or more years were obtained from the high school principals. From the lists obtained, a random sample of 750 Texas public high school teachers were selected to be a part of the study (150 from each category).

Each of the 750 randomly selected teachers was mailed a 41 item Likert type survey instrument which was designed to reveal the degree to which they felt a loss of control over matters of student discipline. The returns are reported in Table I. The teacher mean scores were submitted to analysis of variance in order to test for significant differences among the five high school classification categories. Differences according to teacher age, sex, teaching experience, and subject were also tested by analysis of variance.

TABLE I

Survey Instruments Mailed and Returned

	School Size					
	B	A	2A	3A	4A	Total
Number Mailed	150	150	150	150	150	750
Number Returned	58	73	85	89	81	386
Percentage Returned	39	49	57	59	54	52

Findings

The study revealed that the size of school enrollment does not affect the teachers' perceived control over matters of student discipline; that is, there were no statistically significant differences among those teachers from each of the five high school classification categories. Analysis of the data further revealed no significant differences when considering the specific variables of teacher age, sex, teaching experience, and subject taught. Given the limitations of the study, which included only schools in Texas and a minimum sample size, the authors suggest caution in generalizing the findings beyond the study. It is highly conceivable that a similar study conducted among high schools in other metropolitan areas of the United States might reveal results entirely different from those in this study. Therefore, the authors recommend further research in the area of school size and teacher control as an additional step toward quality education.

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DIRECTIONS: Place the appropriate number in the blank provided.

_____ 1. Your sex is:
(1) Male
(2) Female

_____ 2. Your age is:
(1) 20-29 (4) 50-59
(2) 30-39 (5) 60-69
(3) 40-49

_____ 3. Subject primarily taught:
(1) Language Arts (6) Music
(2) Social Science (7) Art
(3) Math (8) For. Language
(4) Science (9) Other (Specify)
(5) Business _____

_____ 4. Classification of your school:
(1) B (4) 3A
(2) A (5) 4A
(3) 2A

For questions 5-7 place the appropriate number in the blank provided.

_____ 5. Approximate student enrollment in your school.

_____ 7. Teaching experience (in years) excluding this year.

6. Approximate percentage of student enrollment:
_____ Anglo _____ Black
_____ Mexican-American _____ Other

Each of the following statements is often thought to represent a teacher concern. As you begin responding to the statements you will immediately notice a great deal of similarity among statements. While similarity does exist, no two statements are identical and you should answer them independently of each other. There are no right or wrong answers. What is wanted is your individual feeling about each statement. Mark your answer according to the following directions:

If you STRONGLY AGREE, circle number 5
If you AGREE, circle number 4
If you are UNDECIDED or UNCERTAIN, circle number 3
If you DISAGREE, circle number 2
If you STRONGLY DISAGREE, circle number 1

SA	A	U	D	SD	
5	4	3	2	1	1. I generally feel I have considerable influence over curriculum policies in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	2. Students in my school respect teacher authority to the extent I think they should.
5	4	3	2	1	3. I typically receive a positive response to my suggestions for improving the courses in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	4. Given the number of students in my school, I often feel helpless to direct and influence their lives.
5	4	3	2	1	5. It is fruitless to attempt to control students in the hall or on the school ground if I do not know them.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Two issues which are important to all classroom teachers are student discipline and decisions relating to curriculum policy. In an effort to assess the current perceptions of high school teachers regarding these issues, we have been awarded a faculty research grant.

As a concerned educator who is intimately involved in professional education, your participation in this study is vital to its success. We feel confident that you will choose to play an active role in reporting the prevailing teacher attitudes toward these issues.

Please read the survey instrument carefully and respond to each item. The time involved should be no more than seven to nine minutes. We hope that you can respond to the scale at your earliest possible convenience and return it in the postage-free, self-addressed envelope which we have enclosed. Please be assured that all responses will be analyzed as group data, and at no time will you or your school be identified in the study.

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to assist us in seeking ways of improving professional education. We look forward to an early reply.

Sincerely,

Lloyd P. Campbell

John A. Williamson

Lloyd P. Campbell
John A. Williamson
Associate Professors
Secondary Education

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Enclosure

SA	A	U	D	SD		
5	4	3	2	1	6.	I have largely given up attempting to bring about significant change in curriculum development in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	7.	The prevailing concern of many teachers in my school today is simply one of survival.
5	4	3	2	1	8.	Relationships between faculty and students in my school are becoming more personal.
5	4	3	2	1	9.	Students in my school were better off a few years ago when they were provided better direction as to how they should act.
5	4	3	2	1	10.	Beyond my own classroom, the total school program is so complex that I have little control over curriculum matters.
5	4	3	2	1	11.	There are so many difficult student problems in my school that sometimes I feel like "blowing up."
5	4	3	2	1	12.	I am largely optimistic about my influence on my total school environment.
5	4	3	2	1	13.	I think there are adequate means to prevent the major student problems in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	14.	I feel I have a significant impact upon curriculum changes that occur in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	15.	I feel confident about my influence on student behavior in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	16.	With enough effort it is possible to eliminate most of the student problems in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	17.	Things are changing so fast around my school that I hardly know what to expect from day to day.
5	4	3	2	1	18.	In my school there is a general attitude of respect between teachers and students.
5	4	3	2	1	19.	I have considerable influence towards preventing the major discipline problems in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	20.	In my school I often feel more like a number than an individual.
5	4	3	2	1	21.	Discipline in my school is not a major concern.
5	4	3	2	1	22.	I can significantly influence curriculum policies in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	23.	There is much I can do to improve the discipline problems in my school.

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SA	A	U	D	SD		
5	4	3	2	1	24.	As a teacher I have very little say about what the administration does.
5	4	3	2	1	25.	There is a great deal I can do to bring about significant curriculum change in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	26.	Discipline problems are of low priority among teacher concerns in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	27.	I have sufficient influence upon curriculum matters in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	28.	I have considerable influence and control over student behavior outside the classroom, i.e., cafeteria, halls, etc.
5	4	3	2	1	29.	My suggestions for changing course offerings in my school are usually accepted.
5	4	3	2	1	30.	Sometimes my school problems seem so complicated that I have difficulty really understanding what's going on.
5	4	3	2	1	31.	Most of the time I feel I have significant influence over the things that happen in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	32.	Teachers in my school find it unnecessary to spend a great deal of their time in maintaining discipline.
5	4	3	2	1	33.	I feel optimistic toward attempting curriculum change in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	34.	What is lacking in my school today is adequate discipline.
5	4	3	2	1	35.	There is much I can do to bring about significant change in my total school environment.
5	4	3	2	1	36.	I have considerable control over students whom I do not teach.
5	4	3	2	1	37.	There is a great deal I can do outside my classroom to implement curriculum policies.
5	4	3	2	1	38.	It is only wishful thinking that I can control what happens in a school the size of mine.
5	4	3	2	1	39.	In my school there is very little distrust between faculty and students.
5	4	3	2	1	40.	I can handle most of the discipline problems I face in my school.
5	4	3	2	1	41.	I am largely disillusioned about my influence on curriculum policies in my school.